

REMARKS

Restriction was required from the following groups of inventions under 35 U.S.C. § 121 and 372:

Group I, claims 1-19, 21, 22, and 24-26, drawn to a water treatment method.

Group II, claim 20, drawn to a use of treated water.

Group III, claim 23, drawn to a use of magnesium hydroxide.

Group IV, claims 27-34, drawn to an apparatus.

Group V, claim 35, drawn to a process for treating saline process water.

Group VI, claim 36, drawn to a process for manufacturing PCC compounds.

Response to Restriction requirement

Applicants elect Group I, encompassing claims 1-19, 21, 22, and 24-26, drawn to a process for treatment of water. Of these, Claim 1 is amended to contain proper Markush language and other claims are amended to correct minor grammatical errors. Claims 3 and 4 are canceled without prejudice.

Traversal with Respect to Group IV

The present application is a U.S. national phase application. As such, the unity of invention practice of M.P.E.P. §§ 1850 and 1893.03(d) applies to the presently pending claims. As discussed below, Group I (claims 1 to 19, 21, 22 and 24 to 26) and Group IV (claims 27 to 34) represent a single general inventive concept, and no restriction between these groups should be required.

According to M.P.E.P. § 1893.03(d), “a group of inventions is considered linked to form a single general inventive concept where there is a technical relationship among the inventions that involves at least one common or corresponding special technical feature. In the present case, the apparatus of Group IV is designed to implement the process of Group I. These groups of claims share at least two common special technical features, namely the process to be implemented and the nature of the waters to be treated. The Applicants therefore traverse the restriction requirement in regard to Group IV.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, Applicant is not conceding in this

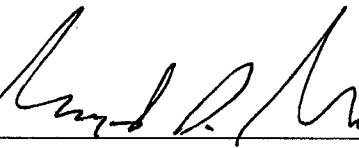
application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that Applicant has made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

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By: 

Raymond D. Smith
Registration No. 55,634
Agent of Record
Customer No. 20995
(949) 760-0404

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092508